State Denies Interference In Chile Vote

By Murrey Marder
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The State Department said yesterday that "any ideas of thwarting" Chile's election processes "were firmly rejected" by the Nixon administration in 1970.

That disavowal broke two days of administration silence on published charges that the State Department, the International Telephone Agency tried to prevent Marxist Salvadore Allende from becoming president of Chile.

By the form of its denial, the State Department, in effect, sought to disassociate the Nixon administration from any current or subsequent charges concerning the propriety of actions by ITT or any other non-governmental group.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is contemplating an investigation of ITT and other giant, multi-national conglomerates.

State Department press officer Charles W. Bray said, "Any ideas of thwarting the Chilean constitutional processes following the election of 1970 were firmly rejected by this administration."

When newsmen noted that some charges predate the 1970 election of Allende, Bray said the denial also applies to that period. But when reprters asked whose "ideas" were "rejected," Bray replied, "I will leave you to draw your own conclusions."

It would be "customary" for the United States to reexamine its relations with a nation when there is a change of government, State Department officials conceded. But "what matters," said Bray, is "what happened as a policy decision . . ."

Bray declined to discuss what was considered and "rejected."

Columnist Jack Anderson, who aired the charges concerning ITT and the CIA, also reported that according to ITT memoranda from Santiago, the State Department in September, 1970, gave a "green light" to U.S. Ambassador Edward Korry for "maximum authority to do all possible, short of a Dominican Republic-type action" (a reference to U.S. military intervention) to "keep Allende from taking power."

Bray was asked if any such instructions were given.

"I think those who examined these memoranda," Bray replied, "will have to come to the conclusion that they contain a great deal of what could be described as opinion and hearsay . . ."

When reporters pressed for more direct response, Bray said, "I am not going to get into a dissection of the communications to and from Santiago during that period."

On Wednesday, Bray said, Secretary of State William P. Rogers assured the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "the United States government did not engage in improper activities in Chile."

The denial, said Bray, applies to the CIA as well. Bray added, "I don't wish to associate the government with suggestions that there were or might have been that kind of activity."

The documents made public by Anderson stated that ITT advocated trying to stimulate "economic chaos" to keep Allende from taking office, but when no crisis developed, the memos blame the State Department for failing to take a stiffer position in Chile. Anderson also said ITT offered the White House money "up to seven figures" to block Allende.

ITT has denied any improper activities.

Bray read to newsmen yesterday President Nixon's references to Chile in Mr. Nixon's latest report to Congress. The President said the United Sates deals "realistically with governments as they are—right and left." and pursues a policy of "non-intervention."

Chilean Ambassador Orlando Letelier called yesterday on Acting Secretary of State John N. Irwin. Rogers is reported to be taking a few days vacation.

They met for an hour and 15 minutes, and a Chilean embassy spokesman later said that Letelier expressed his government's "very serious" concern about "the alleged intervention by ITT and the CIA in Chilean internal affairs during the presidential campaign of 1970."